



South Carolina Young Adult Book Award Nominees 2004 - 2005

All-American Girl	Bronx Masquerade	The Night I Disappeared	Son of the Mob
Ashes of Roses	Dunk	Out of the Fire	Stoner and Spaz
Before We Were Free	The Gospel According to Larry	The Pact	Things Not Seen
Book of Fred	Home of the Braves	Shattering Glass	This Lullaby
Breaking Through	The Lovely Bones	Soldier Boys	What Happened to Lani Garver

All-American Girl
Meg Cabot
Harper Collins, 2002
247 pages

SUMMARY:

Sophomore Samantha Madison stops a presidential assassination attempt, is appointed teen ambassador to the United Nations, and catches the eye of the very cute First Son.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Princess Diaries (series) by Meg Cabot

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants by Ann Brashares

Angus, Thongs, and Full-frontal Snogging (series) by Louise Rennison

Love and Other Four-Letter Words by Carolyn Mackler

The Earth, My Butt and other Big Round Things by Carolyn Mackler

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Language Arts:

Write a free verse poem about your love life, friendship or family.

Write and design a mock newspaper article/magazine cover detailing/depicting one or more events from the novel (re: Samantha saving the President's life, Samantha's appointment to the UN etc.). Create your own 'Top Ten' lists on subjects that interest you.

Social Studies:

Complete the online virtual tour of Washington D.C. (linked below) and create a PowerPoint of the most popular D.C. attractions.

WEB SITES:

[Homepage of author Meg Cabot](#)

[Author interviews](#)

[A virtual visit to Washington D.C.](#)

BOOKTALK:

While waiting for her ride home from an after-school art class, Samantha Madison, a sophomore at John Adams Preparatory School in Washington, DC, inadvertently saves the President's life by jumping on the back of a would-be assassin. Suddenly, she is a celebrity, invited to the White House for dinner, named the teen ambassador to the U.N., and revered by her fellow classmates. Sounds great, right? But even with her new star status, Samantha still doesn't have the one thing she really, really wants - a date with her sister's artistic, rebel boyfriend, Jack. Pulling out all the stops, Samantha decides to capture Jack's attention by asking out the President's son – but she gets way more than she bargained for when she hooks up with the First Son!

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Prepared by: Jen Garrett

Ashes of Roses
Mary Jane Auch
Henry Holt, 2002
250 pages

SUMMARY:

When the Irish immigrant Nolan family arrives on Ellis Island in 1911, they think all their problems are solved. But when Rose and her younger sister are left to make a life in America alone, they become strong and help carve a place for women in America. This historical fiction places Rose at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory where she learns about working conditions for women and children and the harsh realities of America. Her bravery and unconditional love for her family earn her a place in the hearts of all readers.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY:

Stick and Whittle by Han Nolan

Year of the Hangman by Gary Blackwood

Horse thief: a novel by Robert Newton Peck

Girl in a cage by Jane Yolen

The Great Chicago Fire by Elizabeth Massey

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire by A. R. Schaefer

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

U. S. History – 20th Century; New York History

Fire Safety

Women's working conditions

Labor Laws

WEBSITES:

[The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire of 1911](#)

[The Triangle Factory Fire](#)

[The Encyclopedia of New York City -- Triangle Shirtwaist Fire](#)

[The New Deal Network -- Triangle Shirtwaist Fire Photographs](#)

BOOKTALK:

Rose Nolan has just arrived in America, New York City to be precise. She and her family have traveled a long way from Ireland just to start again in America, and she has big dreams for her future. As she and her family look up at the Statue of Liberty for the first time she finally sees hope in their desperate situation. Just as things look rosey and bright, though, bad luck strikes and Rose and her younger sister are left in New York to try to make a life in America all on their own.

While staying with estranged relatives, Rose and her sister try to make a living at small jobs. Learning to cope in a strange country with strange people has its challenges. Rose tries to work in a sweat shop, but the owner tries to take advantage of her, and she barely escapes with her pride. It is not until she gets a job at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory that Rose thinks things will eventually work out for her and her sister. But working conditions are not good for women and children there. Too many people work on each floor and the management is not concerned for their safety. They work long hours with little pay. When disaster strikes, Rose learns a great deal about the importance of family, friends, and the way people should treat one another.

This historical fiction takes us back to the horrid working conditions before labor laws were enforced. The connection to and retelling of the terrible fire that consumed the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York in 1911, compels readers to remember squalid working conditions of the past, and to be grateful for the women of those times who made things better for the rest of us. You go girls!!!!

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Prepared by Donna E. Moyer

Before We Were Free

Julia Alvarez

Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2002

166 pages

SUMMARY:

In the early 1960's Anita de la Torre is 12 years old and living in a dictatorship under the Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic. All around her, members of her extended family are disappearing as they become involved in a plot to overthrow the government. Anita records her fears for her family as well as her thoughts of boys and school in a diary which she must erase each day in case it is found by the secret police who are a constant threat.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

How Tia Lola Came to (Visit) Stay by Julia Alvarez

In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents by Julia Alvarez

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank

Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo by Zlata Filipovic

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

Boat to Nowhere by Maureen Crane Wartski

Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Houston

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Creative Writing

According to the author it is a tradition in Latin America to write a testimonial telling the story of those who did not survive a struggle for freedom. Write your own testimonial for someone you know or have heard about that stood up for a cause.

Language Arts

Compare and contrast the lives of the female writers in the following accounts: *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo*, and *Before We Were Free*.

Current Events/Government

Compare and contrast the Trujillo regime with dictatorships in today's world. Discuss the point of views of the citizens of those countries. Compare the life of a teenager in America today to that of a teenager living in a dictatorship.

Psychology

Examine post-traumatic stress syndrome in teenagers. Discuss research articles and studies with actual cases.

WEB SITES:

[Official Page of Julia Alvarez](#)

[Dominican Republic](#)

[History of the Dominican Republic](#)

BOOKTALK:

Before We Were Free is a simple story of a complex time about a family who struggles for freedom from an evil dictatorship. Twelve year old Anita de la Torre lives in the Dominican Republic in a compound with not only her parents but with her entire extended family. Anita is experiencing the same feelings and changes that young girls everywhere go through as she finds herself facing her first crush and self esteem issues. On top of all the pre-teen struggles however Anita has more serious problems brewing as members of her family begin disappearing including her favorite cousin Carla in the middle of a school day. Soon the secret police begin coming around and searching the compound and although Anita records the events in her diary she must erase the entries immediately for fear of getting caught writing against the Trujillo regime that rules her home in a dictatorship. Anita overhears relatives meeting often outside her bedroom window making plans for a resistance. Anita's mother grows worried, and her sister is sent away when the evil Trujillo sends her flowers. As things grow worse her father and favorite uncle are arrested after the dictator is assassinated. Anita and her mother are forced to go into hiding not knowing what has become of her beloved older brother, or whether her father is still alive.

The author, Julia Alvarez based this book on real events experienced by her cousin in the Dominican Republic and Julia herself lived there until her family fled when she was just 10 years old. This book will keep your interest from start to finish and will leave you grateful that you live in a democratic society where you are free to voice your opinions.

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Prepared by Kim Calhoun

Book of Fred

Abby Bardi

Washington Square Press, 2001

292 pages

SUMMARY:

A sheltered fifteen-year-old girl named Mary Fred Anderson is removed from her home in a fundamentalist sect and placed in foster care in a Washington, D.C. suburb, where a violent act

upon her new family has an indelible impact on her, making her reexamine her long-held beliefs.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Armageddon Summer by Bruce Coville and Jane Yolen

The Secret Life of Bees: A Novel by Sue Monk Kidd

Keeping the Moon by Sarah Dessen

Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes by Chris Crutcher

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Psychology/Sociology:

Study the dynamics of cults and why individuals become involved and stay involved in such groups (indoctrination, conditioning, etc.). Research how many fundamentalist cults exist and their primary beliefs. Discuss Mary's decisions to start to blend in with her peers once she is outside of the cult.

Language Arts:

Use the alternating narration of the novel to discuss point of view and narration. How does how such a technique contribute to or detract from the story?

Information Literacy/Big 6:

Determine the best way to research cults on the Internet and how to determine bias in websites. Have students evaluate sites for their objectivity and/or informative value.

WEB SITES:

[Abby Bardi](#)

[Survivors of the System Foster Children United](#)

[Wellspring Retreat & Resource Center](#) (Center for rehabilitation of former cult members)

BOOKTALK:

Mary Fred Anderson has been raised in an isolated fundamentalist religious cult that believes the end of the world is near. She's never watched TV, never been to school, or never read books other than religious ones. Suddenly, at the age of 15, her parents are sent to jail due to the deaths of two of her younger brothers and she is sent to live with a foster family in Washington, DC. Soon, Mary Fred finds herself torn between the beliefs of her cult and all of the fascinating things she's discovering with her new "family"—including daytime TV and a transsexual neighbor. As she adjusts to her new life, she has a positive influence on the lives of her new family and brings them all closer. Just as she seems to be adjusting to enjoy her new life, an act of violence disrupts her new family and causes her to confront the way she was raised. Without warning, her birth mother returns and takes her to live in a new cult; but will Mary Fred want to stay with her mother or return to her foster family?

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Prepared by: Janet Kenney

Breaking Through
Francisco Jimenez
Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001
195 pages

SUMMARY:

Francisco Jimenez grows up as a poor immigrant worker in the fields only to have his family deported to Mexico. After regaining legal access back to California, the family is separated. Francisco and his brother make it own their own, finding work and returning to a new high school. Can the family be reunited? Once reunited can they succeed in their new life in America?

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith
Parrot in the Oven by Victor Martinez
Baseball in April by Gary DeSoto
Taking Sides by Gary DeSoto
Walking Stars by Victor Villasenor
Emilio by Julia Mercedes
Good Morning Alberto by Sergio Flores

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

History:

Examine the culture of Hispanic teenagers in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Discuss the racism, with which they confronted in their hometown, and contrast with the Civil Rights Movement and events of their day.

Language Arts:

Read this book and then have students write their own autobiographical stories detailing life-changing events in the lives of their families.

Freshman Focus:

Examine the difficulties of relating to a new school culture from the perspective of foreign students. Write reports on steps to help make foreign students feel more at home in your school. Develop a buddy system to identify and help students like Jimenez succeed in school and make friends.

Cross Curriculum Unit (For Teachers who want to work together on a theme unit)

Language Arts:

Read this book and then have students write their own autobiographical stories detailing life-changing events in the lives of their families.

Math:

Students set up a budget for an immigrant family. How do they make ends meet on so little? Chart the rates of immigration from Mexico from the 1940s to the present. How many immigrants are from Latin American countries compared to other countries?

Social Studies and History:

Essays and discussions can be assigned on the following topics:

What were the immigration laws like when Jimenez family came to America? How have the changed?

What are the child labor laws for immigrants? What is life is like for immigrants, especially children?

WEB SITES:

[Immigration Superhighway](#)

[Immigration and Nationality Act](#)

[Federation For American Immigration Reform - F.A.I.R.](#)

[Center for Immigration Studies](#)

[Biography for Francisco Jimenez](#)

[Volvo for Life Awards](#) (Another biography on Francisco Jimenez)

BOOKTALK:

It is a cold crisp, dawn for Francisco Jimenez, but instead of getting ready for school, this teen is in the fields doing backbreaking work of picking strawberries. Although he is only 14, Francisco has little choice but to work. His family is poor, and they depend on every cent from every strawberry he picks for just basic survival, food and housing. What about his rights and child labor laws? Jimenez and his family are invisible to most Americans. They are under the radar of the human rights laws, often having to survive in desperate situations. To make matters worse,

the families are often here illegally. If caught they face deportation to even more desperate lives in Mexico.

Francisco Jimenez's autobiography, *Breaking Through*, tells of the conditions and the hardships faced by immigrant families in America in the 1950s in California. This story, however, also portrays a family's courage to overcome hard obstacles and find a place in America.

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Prepared by: Mary Hill

Bronx Masquerade

Nikki Grimes

Dial Books, 2002

167 pages

SUMMARY:

During a study of the Harlem Renaissance, students in a Bronx high school English class begin to write and share poems. Through "Open Mike" days, the seemingly diverse students realize how much they have in common and that looks can be deceiving.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Jazmin's Notebook by Nikki Grimes

My Man Blue by Nikki Grimes

Shattering Glass by Gail Giles

Breaking Through by Francisco Jimenez

The Circuit by Francisco Jimenez

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Language Arts:

Use various poems from *Bronx Masquerade* along with poems from writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Compare and contrast the styles, voices, and themes of the poems.

Offer at least one "Open Mike" session for the class.

Freshman Focus:

Read *Bronx Masquerade* to class one character and his/her poems at a time. Have students keep a record of the character's perceptions of himself/herself and his/her classmates as the book progresses.. After the class has finished the entire novel, review these records and evaluate the effects the "Open Mike" sessions had on each of the characters, the class as a whole, and the school.

WEB SITES:

[Circle's Harlem Renaissance](#)

[African-American Odyssey](#)

BOOKTALK:

What in the world could writers seventy or eighty years ago during the Harlem Renaissance possibly have to say to teenagers today? Not much, Mr. Ward's English class assumes. Who writes poetry? Not us, Mr. Ward's English class assumes.

Aren't there strict rules about what poetry is and isn't? Very strict rules, they assume.

What person in their right mind would get up and share their poems with the class? No one we know, the students in Mr. Ward's class assume. Why would we risk showing our weaknesses and our true selves to the people in this class? No reason, they assume. What could Hispanic, white, and black students from very different cultures and homes have in common? Very little, Mr. Ward's class assumes. Until ... Open Mike Days are introduced to the class. What begins as a day set aside once a month in this one class quickly becomes a weekly occurrence that has the

students in Mr. Ward's English class learning more about themselves, each other, and their environment than they ever thought imaginable.

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Prepared by: Cathy Garland

Dunk
David Lubar
Clarion Books, 2002
249 pages

SUMMARY:

Chad, hoping to work out his frustrations and his anger by taking a summer job as a dunk tank Bozo on the boardwalk at the New Jersey shore, comes to a better understanding of himself and the uses of humor as he undergoes training on the fine art of insults.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Razzle by [Ellen Wittlinger](#)

Flipped by [Wendelin Van Draanen](#)

Breathing Underwater by [Alex Flinn](#)

No More Dead Dogs by [Gordon Korman](#)

You Don't Know Me by [David Klass](#)

Whale Talk by [Chris Crutcher](#)

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Self-esteem

Clowns (as art form)

Ostracism

Terminal illness

Limited Narrator (3rd person)

WEB SITES:

[David Lubar Homepage](#)

[Jokes](#)

[Author Interview](#)

BOOKTALK:

A book about a guy wanting to be a Bozo clown doesn't really sound like the best book in the world – but if you've ever wanted to look at things from a different point of view, try getting in a dunk tank, hurling insults at people, and experiencing life as a Bozo. Chad wants to be that witty and, yes, sometimes cruel guy that can say whatever he wants without any consequences. When he meets the new tenant upstairs in his home, he discovers he's the man behind the makeup - the bozo in the tank. Chad takes lessons from him and starts to master the skills of wit. Chad wants to prove to the world and himself that he won't end up a loser like his dad, who left his mom and him when he was young. So he'll use his sharp tongue to mask his hurt. When Chad's friend, Jason, acquires a life-threatening illness, Chad has a theory that laughter is the best medicine and puts his newly acquired skills to good use.

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Prepared by: Tas Anjarwalla

The Gospel According to Larry
Janet Tashjian
Henry Holt & Co., 2001
256 pages

SUMMARY:

Josh, seventeen and a senior in high school has an idea of wanting to save the world. In order to do so, he creates a website and impersonates himself as a guy named Larry. Everyone around him is oblivious that Josh is actually Larry. A group is started at school in response to the sermons posted on the web. Larry becomes known worldwide and everyone wants to know more about him and follow his beliefs. Josh struggles to contain his secret from his childhood best friend, Beth, as their friendship matures. Josh is finally forced to go public and people begin to consider him a celebrity and Beth and his father feel betrayed. The resulting hype is a complete contrast to the beliefs he voiced on his website, and he longs for the peace he once had. Josh then leaves town to find the peace he once had.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Black Mirror by Nancy Werlin

Whale Talk by Chris Crutcher

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants by Ann Brashares

Damage by A. M. Jenkins

Big Mouth & Ugly Girl by Joyce Carol Oates

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Consumer Spending

Activism

Internet ethics

False Identity

Fame

BOOKTALK:

Have you ever wished you could make an impact on the world? For seventeen year old Josh, he took it one step beyond wishing and creates a website notifying everyone of his beliefs on anti-consumerism. In a series of sermons Josh is able to convince many young people his age to take a stand and make a difference. The problem is, no one knows that Josh is "Larry" and it is a constant struggle to keep his identity hidden. Josh is found out suddenly becomes a known celebrity. Josh severs the relationship he had with his friend Beth and his father when he runs away seeking peace. This book will leave you wanting to clean out the things you don't need that you have in your closet and will make you consider the things you have left as "needs" rather than "wants."

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Prepared by: April Crumpton

Home of the Braves

David Klass

Frances Foster Books, 2002

320 pages

SUMMARY:

During the fall of his senior year, Joe Brickman is captain of his school's soccer team and looking forward to dating Kris, the knockout who lives down the street. Things at Lawndale High School get turned upside down with the arrival of Antonio Silva, otherwise known as "The Phenom". "The Phenom" is a Brazilian soccer star that shakes up the social order at Lawndale by dating Kris and standing up to the football jocks that rule the school. Violence escalates at the school and Joe finds himself growing up and gaining a new outlook on himself and society.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

You Don't Know Me by David Klass

Beacon Hill Boys by Ken Mochizuki

Rat by Jan Chripko

What Happened to Lani Garver by Carol Plum-Ucci

Son of the Mob by Gordon Korman

Catalyst by Laurie Halse Anderson

You and Violence in Your Family by John Giacobello

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Physical Education

Peer Mediation

American culture

Violence in teens

WEB SITES:

[United States Youth Soccer Online](#)

[Teen Advice Online](#)

[National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center](#)

BOOKTALK:

Perhaps Lawndale High is haunted. That would explain the strange things happening around Joe Brickman. It begins with the arrival of a Brazilian soccer star called “The Phenom” who arrives mysteriously and shakes things up around the school. “The Phenom” shines on the soccer field and controversy follows him everywhere. Things get strange when violence and danger escalate on school grounds. The football jocks expect others to bow to them in the halls and the refusal to do this results in major drama. Joe’s best friend Ed is also a mystery as he plots to take some dark revenge on the entire school. Follow Joe as he determines if the craziness at Lawndale High can be blamed on a phantom or if there is more to it. Will Joe have the courage to get through the events of his senior year that threaten to take him down? Find out in *Home of the Braves*.

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Prepared by: Sue Anne Beym

The Lovely Bones

Alice Sebold

Little, Brown and Company, 2002

328 pages

SUMMARY:

Susie Salmon, is kidnapped, assaulted, and killed by a neighbor. From heaven Susie watches her family and friends as their lives continue after her death.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Lucky by Alice Sebold

Who Killed My Daughter by Lois Duncan

The Afterlife by Gary Soto

Three Junes by Julia Glass

Target by Kathaleen Johnson

Shades of Simon Gray by Joyce McDonald

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Language Arts:

Use literary circles in English class to examine *Lovely Bones* and similar titles: *Life Who Killed My Daughter* and *Shades of Simon Gray*. Compare and contrast the lives and obstacles faced by the main

characters.

Family Life:

Consider the effects of the death of a minor child upon family and friends. Examine the difference between violent and natural death. Write reports on topics such as sibling loss or value of support groups.

Psychology

Examine the grief process. Look for articles that examine such situations and report on what behavior might occur or the stages of grief. Study and debate the role of grief counseling as provided by different agencies such as churches, counseling centers, and victims advocate groups.

Sociology

Look at cultural differences involving death, mourning and ritual.

BOOKTALK: Three days after being assaulted and killed by a neighbor, Susie is in heaven looking down on her family. She knows what would have happened at her house, when she was simply late returning home from junior high, and the steps her family would have taken when they decided she was not late but missing. Susie watches the police investigation and discoveries that lead police to the conclusion she is not only missing but dead. Susie finds peers, a support group, and even friends in heaven. While exploring heaven, Susie discovers that heaven is not the same for everyone and is related to each person's idea of what heaven should be. Additionally, with experience and involvement with heaven, Susie's heaven grows and changes as she does. Initially, Susie focuses heavily on her family and how they are coping with her missing from their lives. She expands to look at her friends, the community, and even her uncaught killer from her heaven. Susie muses about both the things she can see and know from heaven and the many things she will never experience because she is dead. Naturally, a 'missed experience' of prime importance to Susie is her first sexual encounter that is not an act of rape. As time passes following her death, Susie's heavenly "being" ages with her former peers and she is able to borrow the physical body of girlfriend to have a sexual encounter with a boy she has long had a crush on. The encounter is blatantly sexual intercourse, but not presented in graphic detail.

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Prepared by: Linda Bryant

The Night I Disappeared

Julie Reece Deaver

Simon Pulse, 2002

242 pages

SUMMARY:

Jamie and her Mom are a two-person family; Jamie's father died when she was three and a half. Her mom is a very successful defense attorney; Jamie is struggling in school and socially. The only place she feels comfortable and accepted is with her friend Webb. Both of them are leaving California for the summer. Jamie will be far from Webb as she travels with her mother to Chicago for a highly publicized trial. In Chicago, Jamie really figures out who she is and what friendship is all about.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Cut by Patricia McCormick

Crooked by Laura McNeal

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

Dreamland by Sarah Dessen

Blackwater by Eve Bunting

The Wanderer by Sharon Creech

The Folk Keeper by Franny Billingsley

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Kidnapping

Recovered Memory

Friendship

Self-defense

WEB SITES:

[False Memory Syndrome Foundation](#)

[Kidnapped Children](#)

BOOKTALK:

Have you ever felt like no one understands you and that you just don't fit in? Do you hate your school and almost all of the people in it? Do you love your mother even if you know she really doesn't understand you? If so, you can relate to Jamie Thessman. Jamie has just managed to fail her junior year, mainly because she cut so many classes to be with her friend Webb. She and Webb have been friends since Jamie was nine years old. He is the only person who understands her. Her mother is taking her to Chicago for the summer because she has agreed to be the lead attorney in a high profile murder trial there. Webb is going to backpack in Europe for the summer. Jamie cannot believe she isn't going to have Webb around for the whole summer. The only bright spot she can see is that her mother will be so busy with the trial that she will not have time to bug her. As the summer develops, Jamie's mind begins to play tricks on her. Her world begins to splinter into daydreams and what is real. Her daydreams cause her to have a bike wreck that lands her in the emergency room. Even though Jamie is quite a good cook; her daydreams cause her to burn a beautiful meal. She begins to wonder if she is crazy. She does make a friend in Chicago; Morgan Hackett shows Jamie what friendship is all about. She and her psychiatrist aunt help Jamie understand that she is not crazy at all. She has just been carrying around a burden that is just too heavy to bear alone. Read *The Night I Disappeared* and see what made Jamie act as she did.

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Prepared by: Tookie Harrop

Out of the Fire

Deborah Froese

Sumach Press, 2002

282 pages

SUMMARY:

Dayle is a normal sixteen-year-old dealing with school, her friends, family and the recent death of her grandmother. She goes to a party with her boyfriend where an accident causes her and a friend to be badly burned. While she struggles with both mental and physical recoveries, she also tries to keep both her friends and family together.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Falling from Fire by Teena Booth

Ashes of Roses by Mary Jane Auch

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Language Arts:

Writing Journal entries, transitions between real life, dreams, and thoughts.

Biology and Medicine:

Burn injuries, the effect on the body and the medical treatment.

Strategies for Success:

Teen parties, influence of alcohol and their consequences, friendship and character.

Psychology:

Mental recoveries from injuries.

WEB SITES:

[Biographical information about Deborah Froese Burns](#)

BOOKTALK:

When I read the summary of this book, I thought it was going to be just another teenage tragic soap opera, and I thought I would get nothing out of reading it. However, as I started reading, I realized I was wrong. This book is written from the point of view of a normal teenage girl, whose life suddenly changes when she is badly burned in an accident. It shows what Dayle must go through in order to survive and recover, how she must mentally recover. Her deceased grandmother helps her with this in a spiritual sense. Dayle's story also shows how this accident affected her family and friends. It hurt them almost as much as it hurt her. The metaphor of a phoenix is used to describe Dayle's recovery. Like a phoenix, Dayle was reborn from her ashes or burns. No matter what wild ride life takes you on, you must learn to cope with the hardships, move on and become a better person out of the suffering.

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Prepared by: Mollie Carter

The Pact

Drs. Sampson Davis, Georgia Jenkins, and Rameck Hunt

Riverhead Books, 2003

248 pages

SUMMARY:

This is the story of friendship, motivation, and success. Three African American men growing up amidst the street life of gangs, drugs, money, and violence make a promise to each other in high school. These three men make a pact to apply for and complete a program for minority students interested in becoming doctors. The book depicts each man's struggle to grow up, finish college, and complete medical school. It tells the inspirational tale of friendship and success in both academics and life.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Spyglass Tree by Albert Murray

Gifted Hands: the Ben Carson Story by Ben Carson, M.D

Spellbound by Janet McDonald

Finding Fish: A Memoir by Antwone Q. Fisher

Unafraid of the Dark: A Memoir by Rosemary L. Bray

Raising Fences: A Black Man's Love Story by Michael Datcher

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Biography/Autobiography

Careers

Minorities

African American culture

History

WEB SITES:

[The Three Doctors Foundation](#)

[NAACP](#)

[Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental Plus Program](#)

[Access Med](#)

BOOKTALK:

If you grow up around gangs, drugs, and violence you are suppose to be a criminal right?
Not always!

George, Sam, and Rameck grew up in poor homes in New Jersey neighborhoods where kids don't have a chance. Unless they are motivated that is!

During high school these men learned of a program for minority students interested in becoming doctors. That day their lives changed. George, Sam, and Rameck made a promise to each other to finish college and become doctors no matter what, and they did. One is a dentist, two are doctors, and they could not have done it without the friendship and inspiration of one another. The "pact" these men made in high school acted as a positive force to steer them away from the problems and dangers of the streets they played on as boys and send them into the medical world to help their communities as men. Read about growing up in the hood and finding a way out, but a way give back as well in *The Pact*.

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Prepared by: Sue Anne Beym

Shattering Glass

Gail Giles

Roaring Brook Press, 2002

215 pages

SUMMARY:

Rob, the senior BMOC, and his hangers-on decide to pull the male equivalent of My Fair Lady. The guys turn Simon Glass, the butt of everyone's jokes and target of derision, into one of the school's elite. As the social experiment unfolds, Simon, unexpectedly, affects each of Rob's crew in different ways. Through Simon's tutelage and cheating, the dumb jock is transformed into a self-confident academic. Rob's original right-hand man is reduced to relinquishing his girlfriend to the newly crowned Prince Charming, and Rob finds himself, ultimately, being played by his creation. The power struggle takes a decidedly nasty turn in the end.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier

Breaking Point by Alex Flinn

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

Cheating Lessons: a Novel by Nan Willard Cappo

Stoner and Spaz by Ron Koertge

Freewill by Chris Lynch

Big Mouth and Ugly Girl by Joyce Carol Oates

America: a Novel by E. R. Frank

Whale Talk by Chris Crutcher

The Gospel According to Larry by Janet Tashjian

Slave Day by Rob Thomas

The Body of Christopher Creed and What Happened to Lani Garver? by Carol Plum-Ucci

Shades of Simon Gray by Joyce Macdonald

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Language Arts:

Use literary circles and examine *Shattering Glass* and similar titles: *Shades of Simon Gray*, *Breaking Point*, *Cheating Lessons: a Novel*, *Stoner and Spaz*, *Big Mouth and Ugly Girl*, *Whale Talk*, or others listed above. Compare and contrast such issues as cheating, dealing with popularity or unpopularity, and peer pressure. In addition to the thematic approach, the construction of the novels could yield some interesting comparisons and contrasts of plot line v. story line, the use of multiple points of view,

and other literary elements for higher-level classes. Create a webquest dealing with school violence. Compare and contrast *Shattering Glass*, *Chocolate War*, and *Lord of the Flies*.

Science:

Read the novel in conjunction with a unit on natural selection. The idea of survival of the fittest plays a daily role in the lives of animals. Discuss and compare how animals use camouflage and other methods to mask their inferiority or weaknesses to stay alive. Discuss and compare how animals attract prospective mates. Discuss comparisons to Simon's transformation. Look at articles dealing with animals and their systems of social order. Is it any different than what humans do? Does murder occur in species other than humans?

Freshman Strategies:

Read and discuss the ethical implications of Simon's cheating. Discuss the pitfalls of peer pressure and the hubris of the "in" crowd. Discuss ways to counteract these problems in school situations. Role play situations that can be compared and contrasted to situations that Rob, Simon, and the others involved find themselves. Discuss the pressure to fit in at school. Read articles that deal with these issues. Discuss school violence. Create web search about school violence and bullying.

Psychology:

Examine the reasons for the actions of the boys and the disastrous outcome. Breakdown the psychological struggle for power and the superiority complex of the popular crowd and the inferiority complex of the wannabes. Discuss the psychosis of murder. (Could be highly controversial, but I haven't met a 9th grade boy who wouldn't jump at the chance to get some shock value points by researching murderers.) Look for articles that deal with peer pressure, bullying, and the stress of fitting in at school.

BOOKTALK:

"Simon Glass was easy to hate. I never knew exactly why, there was too much to pick from. I guess, really we each hated him for a different reason, but we didn't realize it until the day we killed him." –Young Stewart

Gail Giles' first young adult novel employs multiple points of view to unravel her mad-scientist's-monster-that-ultimately-must-be-destroyed-through-no-fault-of-its-own story. Much like the webbed cracks of a piece of glass, the different viewpoints of teachers, fellow students, police, and parents unfold the dramatic and suspenseful events. They connect varying degrees of corroboration and dismissal of reasons for the violent failure of the boys' social experiment. Rob, the senior BMOC, and his henchmen decide to pull the male equivalent of My Fair Lady. The guys turn Simon Glass, the butt of everyone's jokes and target of derision, into one of the elite. It's amazing what a new haircut and the right clothes can do for a kid beyond the boundaries of the school's social map. Unexpectedly, Simon affects each of Rob's crew in different ways. Through Simon's tutelage and cheating on a college entrance exam, the dumb jock, Coop, is transformed into a self-confident academic. Rob's original right-hand man, Young, is reduced to relinquishing his girlfriend to the newly crowned Prince Charming, and Rob, ultimately, finds himself and his gang being manipulated by their creation. The power struggle takes a nasty turn in the end. The boys all have reasons for disliking Simon before and after the transformation, but why does the dislike elicit such a violent response, who is really responsible, and who is punished for the final act?

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Prepared by: Brian Glassman

Soldier Boys
Dean Hughes
Simon and Schuster, 2001
230 pages

SUMMARY:

Two soldiers – one German, one American – face challenges in the worst war of its time. Dieter (pronounced Dee-ter) has grown up as a Hitler Youth and is devoted to his country and the principles he has been taught. Spence has grown up as a Mormon and must go against his father's wishes in order to satisfy his own conscience as the war escalates. Dieter and Spence come together on the battlefield – one to live, one to die.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Under a War Torn Sky by L. M. Elliott

Soldier X by Don Wulffson

The Forgotten Soldier by Guy Sajer

Band of Brothers by Stephen Ambrose

Slap Your Sides by M. E. Kerr

The Journal of Scott Pendleton Collins: A World War II Soldier by Walter Dean Myers

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Language Arts:

Use the alternating narration of *Soldier Boys* to discuss point of view and narrator. Create a possible alternate ending for the novel. In looking at the experiences of the two narrators, discuss a possible theme. Discuss the impact of the narrators' experiences on their lives.

Connect current world to a similar situation.

Discuss character by creating journal entries for each character at a given time period.

Social Studies:

The attitudes of the people in Germany and America toward World War II were quite different. Read and discuss the attitude of the German youth versus the American youth going into the war. Also, discuss the attitudes and fears of the adults toward the war. Especially note the attitudes of the German adults toward Hitler and toward the war and the reasons the adult attitudes were different from those of the youth.

Military Studies:

Study the strategies of the German and Allies military in the battles described in the novel.

Psychology:

Discuss brainwashing. Read the novel and discuss the effects of the training of the Hitler Youth and its subsequent results in the novel.

Discuss propaganda in its many forms (print, visual and audio media, and in social contexts) and its use in political use in modern history (including the World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam conflict, the Gulf War, and the current war in the Middle East).

WEB SITES:

[Dean Hughes](#)

[History Place: Hitler Youth](#)

[World War II in Europe](#)

[World War II History](#)

BOOKTALK:

What would life have been like as a young man during World War II? In America, does it matter that you're a Mormon and therefore opposed to any war? Spence Morgan saw how the girls looked at the soldiers, especially the paratroopers, returning from boot camp on their way to the war. So he quit school and joined the army to become a paratrooper.

In Germany, if you don't participate in the war, something must be wrong with you. You must be a traitor! Dieter (pronounced Dee-ter) Hedrik wanted the approval of the leader of the Hitler Youth. He wanted the camaraderie with the top ranks of the Hitler Youth. Even when his father tried to tell him that he was learning untruths, Dieter refused to listen. He thought of his father as a

traitor. Finally, the Hitler Youth were called to serve the Fatherland! Dieter pushed himself and his men (really just boys) hard. Their reward was a visit from the Fuhrer himself who presented them with medals! Then Dieter met Shaefer, a veteran corporal who had seen enough of war. Dieter's dogged devotion to the Third Reich did not falter, however, until he had to go into battle and see boys and men killed. This was where he met Spence.

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Prepared by: Joy Danigel

Son of the Mob
Gordon Korman
Hyperion, 2002
262 pages

SUMMARY:

Vince Luca, 17 year-old son of a powerful crime boss, does not want to be involved in his father's business in any way. Life gets hectic when Vince starts dating Kendra, daughter of the FBI agent trying to put Vince's father in jail, as well as help Jimmy Rat, a hoodlum who owes Vince's father money.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare
Romiette and Julio by Sharon Draper
Scribbler of Dreams by Mary E. Pearson
West Side Story by Arthur Laurents
Most Precious Blood by Susan Beth Pfeffer

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Language Arts:

Read the novel and write a paper comparing Vince's family problems with problems in your own family.

Social Psychology:

Read the novel and discuss the different family lifestyles and family relationships depicted in the novel.

Law Related Education:

Read the novel and discuss how the Mafia is portrayed in the story. How does this compare to actual crime families?

WEB SITES:

[The Official Gordon Korman Website](#)
[FBI Organized Crime Website](#)

BOOKTALK:

17 year-old Vince is about to fulfill one of his dreams, making out with a girl on Bryce Beach. But when he reaches into the trunk of his car to get a blanket, he finds an unconscious man. This is only one of the problems Vince faces being the son of Honest Abe Luca, mob boss. Vince wants nothing to do with his father's business. He begins dating Kendra, whose father, an FBI agent, is trying to put Honest Abe Luca in jail. Vince also tries to help Jimmy Rat, a lowlife who owes Honest Abe money. Read *Son of the Mob* to see if Vince can escape the family business, and if Vince and Kendra can overcome their families' different backgrounds and find love.

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Prepared by: Evelyn Newman

Stoner and Spaz
Ronald Koertge

Candlewick Press, 2002
176 pages

SUMMARY:

Two teenagers on opposite sides of the social divide come together and form a bond that changes their both their lives completely.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY:

Stuck in Neutral by Terry Truman

Cut by Patricia McCormick

Smack by Melvin Burgess

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Drug use

Cerebral Palsy

Cinema

WEBSITES:

[Cerebral Palsy](#)

[AMC](#)

BOOKTALK:

Ben Bancroft and Colleen Minou come from different worlds. Colleen from a home with absent parents is into drugs and tattoos. Ben has Cerebral Palsy and an over protective grandmother. These two teenagers seem to have nothing in common, but one night Colleen and Ben meet at a vintage theater and together bond with a love for old movies. This is a story of two teenagers dealing with their self-esteem and how sometimes people never really change.

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Prepared by: Marci Salerno

Things Not Seen
Andrew Clements
Philomel Books, 2002
251 pages

SUMMARY:

Bobby Phillips, average high school student, awakens one morning to discover that he is invisible. While on his journey to discover how he became invisible, and how to become “visible” once again, he learns much about himself and others.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY...

Invisible Man by H. G. Wells

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

The Boggart by Susan Cooper

Fade by Robert Cormier

Harvey: a comedy in three acts by Mary Chase

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Language arts:

Use as a bell-ringer topic for a writing class: 1) If you woke up one morning and discovered you were invisible, how would you feel? **Or** 2) Name 5 positive and 5 negative consequences of being invisible. **Or** Would you rather have an invisibility cloak like Harry Potter, or become truly invisible like Bobby.

Discuss alienation as a theme in literature.

Science:

Research the hazards of the scientific age (radiation, electrocution, accidents)

Freshman Focus or Strategies class:

Discuss how we make some people seem invisible when we ignore them or freeze them out.

Philosophy:

Discuss whether "human spontaneous involuntary invisibility" could be real.

WEB SITES:

[About Andrew Clements](#)

["Real" invisibility cloak?](#)

[Want to learn how to make something disappear?](#)

[Information about sunspots](#)

BOOKTALK:

Bobby Phillips is a boy after every librarian's heart. One morning he awakens to find that he is invisible. And where does he first go to begin to figure out why he has become invisible? To the library! Answers and cures for his predicament aren't easily found. He does, however, meet someone who helps him sort things out. Alicia, a blind girl Bobby meets at the library, is at first unaware of Bobby's condition, then repelled by it, but ultimately can "see" that he is worthy of her friendship and assistance. One of his biggest problems is that school officials investigate his absence and even threaten to take action against his parents. Are there others like him? Will he ever be able to get back to any semblance of a normal life? By the author of *Frindle* and the picture book *Big Al*, *Things Not Seen* will give you much to think about.

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Prepared by Nancy D. Self

This Lullaby

Sarah Dessen

Viking Children's Books; May 2002

352 pages

SUMMARY:

Remy is a compulsive dater but always knows the perfect time to give a boyfriend "The Speech" telling him it's over. Her friends tease that her boyfriend tally is nearing the triple digit mark, but she's a girl who knows just how to avoid any messy emotional entanglement. After all, she's had the example of her five-times-married mother to show her what not to do. So it's no surprise, then, that Remy's rules for relationships keep boys in her life at arm's length. So why does Dexter make it so hard for her to follow her own rules? He's everything she hates: messy, disorganized, much too vulnerable, impulsive, and worst of all, a musician like her father: the father Remy never knew, the father who wrote a famous song for her, the father who disappeared from her life. Remy struggles with learning that loving someone requires a leap of faith, and that a soft landing is never guaranteed.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY....

That Summer by Sarah Dessen

Keeping the Moon by Sarah Dessen

Someone Like You by Sarah Dessen

Sloppy Firsts: A Novel by Megan McCafferty

Second Helpings by Megan McCafferty

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Psychology: Read and discuss the effort Remy makes to keep herself from ever feeling hurt.

Discuss other types of walls people use to keep their feelings protected. What are the risks involved

in feeling love. Is love worth the risks? What effect did the early ugly experience with sex have on Remy's outlook?

Family Life: Look at the cycle created for Remy by the abandonment by her father and her mother's constant tries at marriage. Discuss Remy's view of marriage. Is this more and more the norm?

Language Arts: Examine the book for the richness of the characters. Are the characters in the book recognizable in any high school? How does Dessen illustrate character traits through dialogue, description, and actions? Compare the lives of Remy and her girlfriends. Compare and contrast Remy and Dexter. Compare and contrast Remy and her mother.

BOOKTALK:

"Hey, I've got no illusions about love....It comes, it goes, it leaves casualties or it doesn't. People weren't meant to be together forever, regardless of what the songs say!" Words from Remy, a girl who doesn't believe in love. And you can hardly blame her. Her romance novelist mother is about to get married again for the fifth time, and her father, a '70s hippie singer, died shortly after she was born, leaving her with a one-hit wonder song to remember him by. Entitled "This Lullaby," every time Remy hears it, it seems to feel like a "bruise that never quite healed right." So Remy has become an expert at ending relationships before they ever have a chance to get serious or cause any hurt. She has rules for keeping the guys she dates at arms length. But then Dexter, a quirky, klutzy, alterna-band boy inserts himself into her life, and Remy suddenly finds the carefully constructed walls around her heart beginning to crumble. This is a love story, no doubt about it. A love story with completely believable characters; Remy's life embracing mother, three dependable friends, wacky band members, but especially Remy and Dexter. And this is a love story about learning that loving is taking a chance, it's risking being hurt yes, but it is also risking really feeling totally and completely alive. Love is a leap of faith, and soft landings are never guaranteed. Will Remy ever decide it is worth the risk? Read *This Lullaby* and see.

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Prepared by: Rose Grayson

What Happened to Lani Garver
Carol Plum-Ucci
Harcourt, 2002
307 pages

SUMMARY:

Claire is a teenage girl with problems ranging from a potential relapse of her Leukemia to an eating disorder, and Lani comes into her life not as a person, but almost as an angel. Claire lives in the tiny town of Hackett Island, where different might as well be unacceptable. Lani doesn't fit in with the rest of the guys his age, the "Fish Frat," especially so after he finds out a secret about one of them that could permanently damage his reputation. The book quickly takes a sharp turn for the worse when Lani and Claire are kidnapped by the group, and you'll unfortunately get a look at just how far some people will go to protect an image.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Body of Christopher Creed by Carol Plum-Ucci

Aimee by Mary Beth Miller

Shattering Glass by Gail Giles

Hanging on To Max by Margaret Bechard

Stoner and Spaz by Ron Koertge

Three Clams and an Oyster by Randy Powell

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Peer mediation

Inclusion

Tolerance of alternative lifestyles

Stereotyping

WEB SITES:

[Stereotyping](#)

[Carol Plum-Ucci - School Library Journal](#)

[What happened to Lani Garver?](#)

BOOKTALK: Ever heard of floating angels? More importantly, do you believe in them? It was in Carol Plum-Ucci's book that the topic was first introduced to me. Was Lani Garver a floating angel? This is one of those questions that just can't be answered, and is strictly a matter of opinion. He's different, sure. He didn't fit the profile of a Hackett Islander, he was different. He helped 16 year-old Claire to find her true self, and to never put people in boxes. When she thought her leukemia might be coming back to haunt her, he helped her find a free clinic to get tested. When he found out about her eating problem, he found a therapist for her, who also in turn helped her to realize that the bloody lyrics she wrote to play on her guitar weren't something to be ashamed of. Claire's life was once again beginning to pick up, but simultaneously Lani's started to get worse. We saw him picked on and kidnapped, and worst of all, we watched his life end. The question you are left with: Did his life really end, or did he take his work as a floating angel elsewhere, to help someone new.

Prepared by: Lexi Bourn